

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

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Islamic Spirituality - The Forgotten Path

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Allah ﷻ tells us in the Holy Qur'aan in the 29th Sura, *al-Ankabuut* (The Spider): in Verse69:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And those who strive in Our path, We will certainly guide them to Our Paths: for verily Allah ﷻ is with the righteous

We begin in Allah ﷻ's Blessed Name, we praise Him, we glorify Him and we beseech Him this night for His guidance, blessings and protection as we attempt to address the subject, Islamic Spirituality, the Forgotten Path. We pray for peace and blessings for all His Noble Messengers and in particular, on the last of them all the Blessed Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Our subject tonight is Spirituality and our subject tomorrow night; Insha Allah will be Dajjal, The False Messiah. Yet we begin tonight with Dajjal to show the link between tonight's talk and tomorrow night. The Prophet ﷺ said¹, 'Every prophet of Allah ﷻ has warned his people about Dajjal but I am going to tell you something about him which none has said before me. Dajjal sees with his left eye. He is blind in the right eye. It looks like a bulging grape. But your Lord is not one-eyed. Between Dajjal's eyes on his forehead is written 'kafir' – *kaaf; fa; ra*. Every *Mu'min* (every believer whose heart Islam has entered and so becoming *imaan*) will be able to read - recognize *kafir*. [Whether that *Mu'min* is *khatib* i.e. he can read or write or *ghair katib* i.e. he cannot read or write]². This is by far the most important hadith on Dajjal, since this information was saved until the very last. No more prophets after Muhammad ﷺ. What is the implication? If the *mu'min* can read it means that Abu Lahab can't read. Abu Lahab has eyes, so how come he cannot read but Hazrath Ali ؑ, can read? Is Ali ؑ reading with these (physical) eyes? Do we have any other eyes besides these eyes? The University of Singapore,

¹ Al Jaami` Al Saheeh. Version 1.07 - By Imam Al Bukhari Volume 4: 290.2: Narrated Ibn `Umar:

² "This is because Allaah causes people to understand something when looking at it, as He wills and when He wills. So the believer will see this with his insight, even if he is illiterate, and the kaafir will not be able to see it, even if he is literate. By the same token, the believer will see with his insight evidence that the kaafir will not see. Allaah will enable the believer to understand without him being literate, because at that time, extraordinary things will be happening." (Fath al-Baari by Ibn Hajar al-'Asqallaani, 13/100)

The United Nations says and Governments around the world say, No! We have no other eyes, besides these (physical) eyes. We have no other ears, besides these (physical) ears. We have no other means of acquiring knowledge other than through the senses; through observation and through the rational faculties. But, the Holy Qur'aan says, yes! In addition to these eyes we have internal eyes. In addition to these ears we have internal ears. In addition to our external faculties for acquiring knowledge, we can also acquire knowledge internally. E.g. In Sura Hajj [Sura 22, Verse 46], Allah Ψ addresses a people who are like Uncle Sam, are internally dead. He Ψ says,

أَفَلَمْ يَسِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ

Will they not travel through the earth?

فَتَكُونَ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ يَعْقِلُونَ بِهَا

So that perhaps, perchance, (by traveling through the earth) their dead hearts might come alive

They have PhD's from Harvard but their hearts are dead. Multi-millionaire, with a dozen Mercedes Benz, but the heart is dead. Travel through the earth and see the signs of Allah Ψ on the earth. Perchance by seeing the signs of Allah Ψ, your dead heart might come alive. When the dead heart comes alive, then the heart can understand what the intellect and reason could not understand.

أَوْ عَاذَانِ يَسْمَعُونَ بِهِ

When the heart comes alive, it can hear what otherwise could not be heard.

فَإِنَّهَا لَا تَعْمَى الْأَبْصَارُ

Truly, its not these eyes which are blind

وَلَكِنْ تَعْمَى الْقُلُوبُ الَّتِي فِي الصُّدُورِ

What is blind is the heart, which is inside the chest.
So the heart can see. In addition to this (physical) eye, we also have this (internal) eye. Now it is possible for us to understand the hadith.

Dajjal see with one eye, his left eye. The left eye symbolizes his external capacity for sight. Dajjal is blind in the right eye; indicating that Dajjal is internally blind. Therefore all those that follow Dajjal will all be internally blind. What is the price that we pay if we are internally blind? PhD from university of Singapore! But inside, blind. What is the price that we pay? Allah Ψ declares that huge numbers of people are condemned for the hellfire. What did they do that they are condemned for the hellfire?

[The 7th Sura, *al-Araaf* [The Heights], Verse 179]

لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَلَهُمْ آذَانٌ لَا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا

They have hearts but they cannot understand. They have eyes but they cannot see. They have ears but they cannot hear.

The people who are internally blind are a people who in the age of Dajjal are destined for the hellfire. How does Allah Ψ describe such people? He Ψ says:
[The 7th Sura, *al-Araaf* [The Heights], Verse 179]

أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ

They are just like cattle

What! With a PhD? Yes! They are just like cattle.

بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ

Rather! They are more misguided than cattle.

أُولَٰئِكَ هُمُ الْغَافِلُونَ

These are the ones that are truly heedless.
Heedless of the signs of Allah Ψ!

This is our introduction to Spirituality in Islam. Spirituality is the path through which the heart comes alive. When the heart comes alive, then it can see; and hear; and understand that which rationality can never penetrate. Allah Ψ sent down in the Holy Qur'aan the 18th Sura, *Kahf* (The Cave). The Holy Prophet ε identified this Sura as the only Sura in the Holy Qur'aan which protects from Dajjal. Recite the first ten verses of Sura, *Kahf* over Dajjal and he won't be able to harm you. He also said something else about Sura, *Kahf*. You know these (physical) eyes can't see unless there is light. Similarly this eye (spiritual eye of the heart) can't see without *Nur*. You can't buy *nur* in the stock market. Where does the *Nur* come from?

[The 24th Sura, *al-Nur* (The Light), Verse 35]

﴿اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ﴾

Allah Ψ encompasses the totality of the *Nur* in the Heaven and the Earth
You cannot get *nur* other than from Allah Ψ. Not even from the Security Council of the UN. So we need *nur*, if we are to be protected from Dajjal; and therefore to be able to see with the internal eye, -because he does not see with the internal eye-. He ε said recite Sura *Kahf* on a Friday³ and it will deliver to you *nur* from the heavens to the earth and that *nur* will stay with you until the next Friday. So now I ask you to raise your hands. Let me see how many people have recited Sura *al-Kahf* last Friday. What happened to your hands? Something wrong? This is the dearest Masjid in the whole of Singapore for me. Fourteen years ago when I came to Singapore for the first time I came as a guest of this Masjid. I lectured here first and I slept at the room at the back. So this Masjid is the dearest of all. It is named

³ The Holy Prophet ε said: "Whoever would read Sura *Al-Kahf* on Friday it would provide him of light for the duration between the two Fridays". It was reported by 'Al-Hakim, page 564 of volume 1 who said that it was of sound ascription.

after Maulana Abd al-Aleem Siddiqui ؓ. Do you know who he was? My teacher, my *shaykh*, my *murshid* was Maulana Dr. Muhammad Fazlur Rahman Ansari ؓ whose masterpiece, the two volumes The Qur'aanic Foundations and Structure of Muslim Society is now available. His teacher, his *shaykh*, his *murshid* was Maulana Abd al-Aleem Siddiqui ؓ. So I am the second generation from him. So next time I come I want to see your hands raised that you are now reciting Sura al-Kahf every Friday without failure.

In Sura al-Kahf Allah ﷻ gives us wonderful instruction on the consequences of not having the capacity to see with the internal eye. He takes Musa ؑ the Nabi who was sent to Bani Israel, those who say that they are the chosen people of Allah ﷻ, the elite, the select whilst the rest of mankind is gentile. According to Sahih Bukhari, Musa ؑ has delivered a Khutbah at Sinai. Someone came to him and said, 'O Musa! What a wonderful Khutbah. You must be the most learned man in the world.' What Musa ؑ should have replied was, 'Praise is due to Allah ﷻ!' What Musa ؑ should have replied was, 'Beyond any man is He who is all learned.' But he didn't say that. He said what the PhD From the university says, 'yes, I am the most learned man in the world.' This is what happens when you secularize knowledge. You take Allah ﷻ out of the process of learning. 'He has nothing to do with it. I am the expert in my field. I am the top scholar in my field.' He says, 'yes, I am the most learned man in the world.' When you do that and don't recognize Allah ﷻ as the source of all knowledge, then He cuts off your internal sight. So Musa ؑ temporarily is without internal sight. Allah ﷻ then says to him, 'There is a servant of mine more learned than you are, Musa.' So Musa ؑ, says, 'I would like to meet him.' Then Allah ﷻ gives him instructions to take a fish, put it in a basket and travel in the direction where the two seas meet- *majmaul bahrain*. 'When the fish jumps out of the basket, there you shall meet him.' This is a rather humiliating thing for the most learned man in the world to do. Allah ﷻ cuts him down. 'Learn humility if you really are learned. The sign of knowledge is humility.' So he goes and eventually, he meets him. He is called Khidr ؑ, which means 'green'. This is a man more learned than Musa ؑ. There is a difference between his knowledge and this knowledge. This knowledge can grow old and stale and be superseded by other knowledge and so become obsolete. Like

the computer you had ten years ago, obsolete now. But this knowledge does not grow obsolete, always green always relevant, always fresh. Like a fresh breeze, this is the knowledge of Khidr ؑ that's why he is Mr. Green.

Musa ؑ asks, 'Can I accompany you so that I may learn from you?' Very difficult! Really difficult for a one eyed man to learn from a two eyed man. The on-eyed man has a PhD, so he believes he knows all. Hazrath Khidr ؑ says, 'You are not going to be able to show patience with me.' How correct is that answer; unto this day; but he keeps on insisting, 'I want to go with you.' He is allowed to accompany Khidr ؑ, on condition he does not ask questions unless Khidr ؑ explains. He is cut down. So they travel and come to the sea or the water and there they board a boat. Sahih Bukhari tells us a nice story about what happened on the boat. A little bird came and sat on the sail of the boat and then flew down dipped its beak into the water and flew back up with one drop of water inside the mouth. Khidr ؑ points to the bird and says, 'Musa ؑ, the knowledge that you have plus the knowledge that I have when compared to Allah ﷻ' s knowledge is like the one drop of water in the beak of the bird. That is the first lesson to teach a one eyed man. Then three events occur:

1. Khidr ؑ breaks the bottom of the boat. Musa ؑ is annoyed and says, 'Why do you do such a wicked thing?'
2. When they get off the boat they came across a boy whom Khidr ؑ killed. Hazrath Musa ؑ is now more than just angry because he remembers that he accidentally killed a man in Egypt and what suffering he suffered because of this. So being very angry he demands an explanation from Hazrath Khidr ؑ as to why he slew an innocent boy.
3. Then they came to a town which was very inhospitable. There was a wall which someone had constructed and it was crumbling. Hazrath Khidr ؑ pays for the wall to be rebuilt. Hazrath Musa ؑ cannot understand. 'Why would you pay to do this in a town that doesn't even show elementary hospitality? You can at least demand a refund of the amount you have spent?' says Hazrath Musa ؑ.

What is important about these three events is that on each occasion Hazrath Musa ؑ formed his judgment based on external observation and rational analysis.

And yet on all three occasions he was wrong. Suratul Kahf is knocking at your hearts. Warning you! That in the age of Dajjal if you depend only on your external observation and rational investigations to formulate your judgment, you will be wrong because Dajjal comes with two things: a river and a fire. His river is a fire and his fire is the cool waters of the river. In other words, appearance and reality will be completely different from each other in the age of Dajjal. It looks good but it's dangerous. It looks bad but the reality is different it is good. In the age of Dajjal appearance and reality are going to be completely different from each other so if judgment is based on external observation and rational enquiry alone you are going to be wrong and will pay a terrible price for your wrong judgment. Hazrath Khidr ؑ explains saying, "What I did with this boat appeared to you to be bad but was actually good. There is a king, a government that is coming seizing people's property and they are going to be seizing this boat, thus by damaging the boat, I saved the boat so when the king is gone the poor fishermen can repair their boat. It looked bad to you but actually I did them a favour. This little boy! You sometimes plant a seed and you get a rose. Sometimes you plant a seed and you get a scorpion. So when you sleep with your wife make *dua*, 'O Allah ﷻ ! This seed which I plant I pray it may grow into something good and beautiful.' So this child was destined to grow into such a Devil that his parent's faith would have been threatened. By killing the child and praying to Allah ﷻ to send them another child who would be *coolness for their eyes (kurratu aiyun)* I did something good for them but you couldn't see that. As regards the wall: In this town there was a believer (*mu'min*), who had two little children, he was dying he had some money and he couldn't find a single person he could trust to keep the money until his children grow. So he had to dig a hole and bury the money. Having buried the money he then built a wall and prayed to Allah ﷻ that He would guide them to the money. When I found the wall crumbling, Allah ﷻ instructed me to rebuild it.'

So knowledge, instructions and guidance can come from above. What we are introduced to here is a branch of knowledge that is called epistemology. What is knowledge? Is it possible for us to acquire knowledge and how is it acquired? The Holy Qur'aan teaches us: Did you acquire knowledge? That knowledge wherein

there is no doubt never becomes obsolete like the computer from ten years ago.
[The Holy Qur'aan says in the 102nd Sura, *Takaathur* (The Piling up):

كَأَلَّا لَوْ تَعْلَمُونَ عِلْمَ الْيَقِينِ

If you had that knowledge that is borne of certainty
Knowledge that comes directly from Allah Ψ

لَتَرَوُنَّ الْجَحِيمَ

Ye will be able to see the Hell-fire!

Knowledge is possible, but it does not only come this way (learned by the brain), it also comes this way (revealed to the heart). Remember that in addition to knowledge externally derived, it is also internally, intuitively, spiritually acquired.

The companions were sitting; talking amongst themselves in the Masjid and the Holy Prophet ε came and sat with them. This was after the farewell Hajj when they had returned to Madinah and so he has only 81 days left in his blessed life. This is the last part of his life. Suddenly a stranger entered into the Masjid dressed all in white spotlessly clean with no dust upon him, with black hair. He was not a traveler, yet no-one could recognize who he was. This is mystery, suspense as to who is this man. He came and sat directly opposite the Holy Prophet ε and asked five questions as if he is a school-master and the Holy Prophet ε replies. Every time the Holy Prophet ε would reply, this man would say, 'Your answer is correct.' Thereafter he got up and left as suddenly and as strangely as he had come. The Holy Prophet ε then asked, 'Do you know who he was?' They answered, 'We don't! Allah Ψ and His Messenger know best.' The Holy Prophet ε said, 'This was Jibraeel υ.' The Angel Jibraeel υ appeared in front of everybody as a human being, for all to see. The first time, the only time, the last time in history that it happened. It never happened before and it will not happen again. This is history, if you forget this you pay a price for it. The questions were: What is Islam? What is *Imaan*? And then came, What is *al-Ihsaan*? I wish that they had not invented the word Sufism. Really! There was no

need for it. I wish that the term *Tasawwuf* had never been invented. My life would have been easier. Whoever did it, whatever the reason why he did it, did something which should not have been done. Because Allah Ψ has Himself given us the word and the Holy Qur'aan tells us [in the 29th Sura, *al-Ankabuut* (The Spider): in Verse69]:

وَالَّذِينَ جَاهَدُوا فِينَا

Those who strive and struggle and make Jihad in Us, to reach Us

لَنَهْدِيَنَّهُمْ سُبُلَنَا

We will guide them to the paths, which lead to Us

وَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَمَعَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And Allah Ψ is ever with those who struggle for *al-Ihsaan*

And the Holy Prophet ε is asked as to what *al-Ihsaan*. It is there in the hadith and it is there in the Holy Qur'aan. *Al-Ihsaan* is *Tasawwuf*. There is no difference between the two. Why then did we need the term *tasawwuf*? So that people could accuse us of *bid'ah* and *haraam*? I agree with Dr. Israar Ahmad of Pakistan, the *ameer* of Tanzeem e Islami who has argued that we should use the terminology given by Allah Ψ and His Messenger.

Al-Ihsaan: The Holy Prophet ε replied and he said of *al-ihsaan*: 'An tahbudallaha ka annaka tara.' [That you should worship Allah Ψ: That you should serve Allah Ψ as though you are seeing Him]. *Fa illam takun tara* [For if you cannot see Him] *fa innahu yara* [surely He is seeing you]. When Musa υ went up the mountain, Mount Sinai, did he not ask? I told you last night, the test of true love in the heart; if you say you have love in your heart, then you would long, with a great, great, great longing to see the face of the one you love. If you had to wait a thousand years, you will wait even for a glimpse of the one you love. If you had to walk a thousand miles, you would do it gladly just even for a glimpse of the face of the one you love. This is love. So Musa υ, says: [the 7th Sura, *al-Araaf*, Verse 143]

أَرِيْكَ أَنْظُرَ إِلَيْكَ

Show me your face, I want to see You

This is love.

Allah Ψ replies and says:

لَنْ تَرَنِيْ

No Musa υ! You can't see Me.

Meaning: 'Not with these eyes! You can't see Me.'

But the companions of the Holy Prophet ε they asked, 'O Messenger! Will we be able to see Allah Ψ on the last day, the Day of Judgment?' He responded and he asked, 'Do you have any difficulty in seeing the sun when it is mid-day?' They said, 'No problem we can see it.' He asked, 'Do you have any difficulty in seeing the moon when it is full moon?' They said, 'No!' He said, 'that's how you are going to see your Lord on the Last Day.' Allah Ψ says, 'You can't see Me' and the Holy Prophet ε says you will see Him. Now we can understand that there is no contradiction here. The meaning is, 'You can't see Me with these (physical) eyes.' Do we have any other eyes besides these eyes? The Holy Qur'aan says, 'Yes! The heart can see' So it is with the heart that we will see Allah Ψ on the last day. How can the heart see? In order for the heart to see it must first embrace Islam, the truth. Only the truth will deliver internal sight. After you have embraced the truth; the truth must travel from your lips and enter the heart. Then it is called *imaan*. In order for it to enter into the heart, we have to live the truth with sincerity. We will be tested, we must pass the test. The only way I can buy a house, or flat is to take a bank loan on interest. There is no other way. You lie. You should be ashamed of yourself for lying, when you say there is no other way. When the angels are taking such people into the hell-fire and the angels ask[4th Sura, an-Nisaa, verse 97], '*Fi ma kuntum.*' 'What went wrong? How come you landed in this mess? We are taking you into the hell-fire.' Then you reply, 'There was no other choice for us. There was no other way we could buy a flat except

with a bank loan on interest.' Then the angels ask as mentioned in the 4th Sura, an-Nisaa in verse 97:

أَلَمْ تَكُنْ أَرْضَ اللَّهِ وَاسِعَةً

Was Allah Ψ's earth not wide?

Was Allah Ψ's earth not wide that you could have searched somewhere on Allah Ψ's earth where you could live without disgracing Him and betraying Him? Into the hell-fire! So you will be tested. Only when you pass the test will Allah Ψ put the truth in the heart.

In order for the heart to accommodate the truth, the heart must now be cleansed and purified. This is called, *Tazkiyah* or internal purification. After the heart has been purified and the heart is turned to Allah Ψ then Allah Ψ will put *nur* into the heart. Now you can see what other wise you could never see. The 24th Sura, an-Nur [The Light], verse 35 is the most important verse of the Holy Qur'aan teaching us the methodology for spiritual growth. Teaching us the way through which we can learn to see with the internal eye when we are spiritually mobilized.

اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ

Allah Ψ is the Light of the heavens and the earth.

مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ

The example by which you could understand His light is that of a niche in the wall where you used to put a lamp before the electricity came.

فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ

In that niche in the wall there is a lamp. Abdullah ibn Abbas τ said that the Holy Prophet ε said that that *mishkaat* or niche is not in the wall. Its here in the chest and in that space within the chest there is a lamp. I can't do it now but when you

teach this lesson, you turn off the lights and you light an oil lamp. All the children will look at the lamp and they will never forget that lesson for the rest of their lives. This is the way to teach it.

الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ

The lamp has a glass around it.

الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ

The glass is so spotlessly clean that it glitters like a shining star.

So the process of internal purification is to look to see the stains on the glass within your own heart and start to cleanse them, purify them and wash them out. The process of washing away the stains on the glass is first of all to recognize that we have committed sin. Secondly, to turn away from the sin; this is called *tauba*. When you turn you must turn with sincerity. Don't turn in the day and turn back at night. [The 66th Sura, *at-Tahreem* (the Prohibition, verse 8):

تُوبُوا إِلَى اللَّهِ تَوْبَةً نَّصُوحًا

Turn away from the sin. Turn to Allah ﷻ and do it with sincerity. Having turned away from this sin, there must be regret in your heart for what you did. [*Nafsul lawwama* reproaching]: 'How could I ever have done that? I am ashamed of myself. O My Lord! Kindly put a cover over the sins I have committed because I am ashamed of them.' Weep for the things you did yesterday. Now you must commit yourself, never again to return to them. When you give your word, keep it. Then one last thing remains. You must spend the rest of your life teaching others, helping others, guiding others, warning others, that they do not walk on that path of sin. If you do that, then Allah ﷻ is prepared to forgive all sins. He wipes it away and the glass becomes clean. Sometimes we think the stain is gone, like in the case of lust. In fact it is not gone and still more work remains. How will I know that the stain remains? Dreams! In my dream I will commit the sin again. So that dream is telling me that the stain is still there so go back and wash. After

the glass has been cleaned and the stains have been removed then the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that these hearts they catch rust. The dust accumulates. So in addition to cleaning you also have to keep on constantly polishing. What is the polish for the glass? The Holy Prophet ﷺ said the polish is *zikr*. What is *zikr*? *Zikr* has its external forms in which you recite mechanically. The real *zikr* is internal. *Zikr* is remembrance. Remembrance is most of all, remembrance of the one you love. When you truly love someone, then that love will go with you wherever you go. Yes! That love is there in your heart at all times. You were standing and its there. You sit down its there. You lie down its still there. Whenever the memory of the beloved enters into the heart, it's like a fragrance (*khushbu*) coming into the heart. Whenever the memory of the beloved enters into the heart you are transported into another world. This is *zikr*. 'Do you love Me?' Allah ﷻ asks. 'Do you love Me as much as your dog loves you? Are you as faithful to Me as your horse is faithful to you? Do you serve Me as well as they serve you? Do you show as much courage doing My work as they do in doing your work? [The 100th Sura, al-aadiyaat (Those That Run), verses 1-6]:

وَالْعَدِيدَاتِ ضَبْحًا ① فَالْمُورِيَّتِ قَدْحًا ② فَالْمُغِيرَاتِ صُبْحًا ③

فَأَثَرُنَ بِهِ نَقْعًا ④ فَوَسْطُنَ بِهِ جَمْعًا ⑤

The horses that you love so much; they run so fast they're panting. When they run at night their hooves hit on the stone and sparks fly. When the morning comes and the fresh breeze enters into their lungs, they run with a new spurt of speed. When they face the enemy they dash into the very center of the ranks of the enemy

'Do you love Me as much as much as they love you? Do you serve Me the way they serve you? Are you as loyal to Me as they are loyal to you?

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِرَبِّهِ لَكَنُودٌ

Truly Man is, to his Lord, ungrateful;

'No you don't! You are ever negligent of your relationship with Me' Allah Ψ is saying. 'Your dog loves you more than you love Me and your horse is more faithful to you than you are to Me.' Who are those that will live for Allah Ψ tonight. Only those that live for Allah Ψ, only they will die for Allah Ψ. They call that fundamentalism and terrorism. As the love for Allah Ψ enters into the heart and the servant sets his sight, saying, 'This is my goal. I am twenty years of age, come back and see me after forty years and you will still see me walking on this same road, going in the same direction.' Consistency in his life! This is my goal and mission. *Zikr* is what delivers that. The *zikr* polishes the glass. The verse of the Holy Qur'aan continues that this lamp has oil which comes from the blessed olive tree which is [The 24th Sura, an-Nur [The Light], verse 35]:

لَا شَرْقِيَّةَ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةَ

It belongs neither to the east nor to the west for it stands firmly for Allah Ψ. It is [The 6th Sura, *al-Anaam*[The Cattle], verse 162]:

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

Say: "Truly, my prayer and my service of sacrifice, my life and my death, are (all) for Allah, the Cherisher of the Worlds;

When you have a person who lives for Allah Ψ like that and who works, struggles and sacrifices in the way of Allah Ψ then you produce oil. That oil is pure oil. [The 24th Sura, an-Nur [The Light], verse 35]:

يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ

The oil itself gets ablaze although the fire does not touch it

This is different from the oil you put in your motor vehicle. This one glows without fire touching it. Can you imagine what is going to happen when fire touches it? You will not grow spiritually until fire touches you. When fire touches you and the oil is already there inside of you, then you attain light.

نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ

Light upon light

This light does not come from the stock-market, Allah Ψ gives it

يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ

Allah Ψ guides towards His light whomever He wills

وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَلَ لِلنَّاسِ

Allah Ψ is presenting these lessons to mankind that they may reflect over it

وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ

And Allah Ψ has knowledge of all things

Therefore the *nur* is for *ilm*. Thus the essential goal of the spiritual quest is knowledge which comes directly from Allah Ψ. When you have that knowledge or the capacity for internal, intuitive, spiritual knowledge; what do you use it for? How important is it? Where do you apply it? This is the last part of the epistemological⁴ lesson.

The stranger asked question four. When will the last day come? The Holy Prophet ε replied, 'The one who is being questioned has no more knowledge than the one who is questioning.' Next question please! That's the way to respond to anybody who wants to engage us on this subject. Only Allah Ψ knows when the world will come to an end. None of us knows. I said in my previous lectures that by my calculation using the hadith and external observation that I expect sometime within the next fifty years. The Muslim army will come and destroy the state of Israel. One fellow responded to me from Pakistan saying, 'Shaykh, I can't wait for fifty years that is too long.' This next fifty years is going to be the worst in our

⁴ Epistemology: the branch of philosophy that studies the nature of knowledge, in particular its foundations, scope, and validity

history. The greatest suffering and oppression will come this next fifty years. The wickedest of the wickedest of the people will be the rulers of the people. Mercilessly and shamelessly they will be attacking Islam whilst hiding behind a curtain called terrorism. So watch it! If you want to be a part time Muslim, no problem, but the minute you want to be a true servant of Allah ﷻ they're coming after you. When they come after you, you had better have protection from Allah ﷻ. If you are not reciting Suratul Kahf every Friday they are going to cut you down. While it is only Allah ﷻ who knows when the Last Day will come, the Holy Qur'aan tells us that the heart of the believer always feels that it is close while the disbeliever always thinks its far away.

Then came question five which teaches us the application of spirituality of *al-ihsaan*. How do you apply it? What is its practical utility? The stranger asked, 'What are the signs of the Last Day?' The Holy Prophet ﷺ replied and he said:

1. 'You will find a naked, barefooted shepherd – [meaning people who have the brains; the intellectual acumen of naked, barefooted shepherds] – competing with each other to build high rise buildings.'

I have the tallest building in the world. They have the intellectual acumen naked, barefooted shepherds because they measure progress in this way. Hen we have built the tallest building, the grandest airport in the world and all these PR projects that make our place look like heaven we have achieved progress. So they measure progress with PR projects. Allah ﷻ says [in the 49th Sura, *al-Hujeraat* [The Inner Chambers] in verse 13]:

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتَقَىٰكُمْ

Indeed the more honourable among you, in the sight of Allah, is one who is more pious among you

You shouldn't measure progress with high rise buildings but rather measure progress with how much fear of Allah ﷻ is there in the heart. You have made no progress. You may have built the tallest building but you have no fear of Allah ﷻ in your heart. So you and all those that stand with you represent no progress at all. He is underneath a mango tree, a shoemaker making shoes but in his heart

there is the fear of his Lord, so he is superior to you. When you see a world acclaiming those who build these high rise buildings, the tallest building in the world and the world considers that to be progress and the world looks down upon his one who has the fear of Allah ﷻ in his heart, you know that is a major sign of the Last Day. How many can see it today and how many are fooled? Then he came to the last one:

2. He said, 'You will find that the slave woman will give birth to her mistress.' How can a slave woman give birth to her mistress? Shall I leave you to think about it until tomorrow night? The only one who will be able to see that sign of Allah ﷻ, when it comes true in the world- a major sign of the Last Day- is not the one who has a PhD from al-Azhar University but inside has nothing. It is the one who sees with two eyes, who has knowledge externally derived and internally derived. This is the most learned of all men. So when Musa ؑ asked, 'where can I meet him?' and Allah ﷻ said, 'Go and you will find him at the place at which the two oceans meet- *majmaul Bahrain*- . The commentator of the Holy Qur'aan, Baidawi⁵, is the only one who has penetrated the meaning of it. He said that the two oceans are: the ocean of knowledge externally acquired and the ocean of knowledge internally acquired. When these two oceans of knowledge combine together in one man, harmoniously, is integrated together, you have the most learned of all men. Such a man was Maulana Muhammad Abd al-Aleem Siddiqui ؑ, after whom this Masjid was named, and such a man was his student, and my teacher, Maulana Dr. Muhammad Fazlur Rahman Ansari ؑ. We are just little candles glowing from the light which came from these great scholars of Islam. It is when you use these two oceans to combine together that you can crack it, 'a slave woman giving birth to her mistress.'

It is already 10 pm so I am going to be very brief. In order to understand this you need to recognize two things which come from Dajjal and with which he attacks to try and take control of mankind. One, the Holy Prophet ﷺ said that, 'The Age of Dajjal would be the age [Kasaratul *riba*]-when *riba* (interest and usury) will take

⁵ BAIDAWI ('Abdallah ibn 'Umar al-Baidawi) Muslim critic, was born in Fars, where his father was chief judge, in the time of the Atabek ruler Abu Bakr ibn Sa'd (1226-60). He himself became judge in Shiraz, and died in Tabriz about 1286. His chief work is the commentary on the Koran entitled The Secrets of Revelation and The Secrets of Interpretation (*Asrar ut-tanzil wa Asrar ut-ta'wil*).

control of the world. What happens when *riba* takes control of an economy is that the rich will remain permanently rich and the poor will remain permanently poor. Wealth will no longer circulate. The rich will grow richer and the poor will reach to the depths of destitution. In other words another age of slavery descends upon mankind. That has already come. The *Ulama* of Islam have been eating *halwa*; it has already come upon us. Nobody teaches the subject about the prohibition of *riba*. I had the good fortune to live in New York, the capital city of *riba*, and there I was able to put book knowledge to bear upon the real economy in the world today. In addition I was blessed to study western economics; International Monetary Economics for example in Europe. This was how Allah ﷻ blessed me with some understanding of the subject; that's why you will find my book outside, *The Prohibition of Riba in the Qur'aan and Sunnah*. It took me four years to write that book. When an economy is based on *Riba* then wealth will no longer circulate. Its like mankind traveling on a ship with 15 % of the population of the world traveling first class, with permanent first class tickets having the best drinking water, food, servants and luxury. The other 85 % are down in the hold of the ship living in squalor, misery, suffering and destitution, falling ill and dying like flies. So they are slaves down there. That's Indonesia today. That woman therefore is a slave woman down in the hold of the ship. She is the one we are talking about.

In the age of Dajjal, not only do we have *riba*, but something else. 'The last people to come out to Dajjal will be women,' said the Holy Prophet ﷺ. Dajjal will weave such a web, of brainwashing of women that a man will have to return to his home and tie down his wife, daughter and sister to protect and preserve them from Dajjal. They're brainwashed! Nothing you could say to them will change their minds. Brainwashed! This is the modern feminist movement. What does the modern feminist movement want to do? The modern feminist movement challenges the notion that men and women are functionally different. That man has different basic functions from women. The modern feminist movement wants to remove the barriers. Anything a man does a women should have the freedom to do it. So women embrace the functional role of men in the feminist revolution. The Woman down in the hold is too poor to do it, the ones who do it are the

elite. They're rich! These are the first to embrace the functional role of men, the women traveling first-class. What happens when women go out to work, the way men do. At 7 am she is dressed to go to work the way he is. She comes back home in the evening 6 to 7 pm the same way that he does. When she dresses to go to work, this is not going to a party; this is going to work so she has to dress in working clothes. So her dress becomes masculine. When she gets into a position of authority in work, has people working under her, then she has to shed her shyness and talk like a man; behave like a man; so that she can command respect. But in the Holy Qur'aan Allah ﷻ describes women differently. Musa ؑ, remember how he drew the water for the girls. Then one of them came back. Her father sent her to call him. Now she has to approach this man. A women approaching a man, and Allah ﷻ describes in the Holy Qur'aan how shy and bashful she was that she has to approach a man. Uncle Sam's daughter isn't shy! They behave, dress and talk like men. Eventually their faces begin to look like faces of men. The softness, shyness and bashfulness is gone. As women assume the functional role of men, they begin to lose their femininity. But Allah ﷻ describes the male and the female by using the analogy of the night and the day. Listen to Him! [The 92nd Sura, al-Layl [The Night], verses]

وَاللَّيْلِ إِذَا يَغْشَىٰ ①

He takes an oath by the night and that which it shrouds and covers so mysteriously, so beautifully

وَالنَّهَارِ إِذَا تَجَلَّىٰ ②

He takes an oath by the day and its bright powerful light

وَمَا خَلَقَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَىٰ ③

That, in the same way that Allah ﷻ has created the night and the day; so to, did He create the male and the female.

Allah Ψ wants the day to be day and He wants the night to be night. When the day is day and the night is night, do you notice the attraction? How much they are attracted to each other! When the day is coming to an end and it is approaching the night do you notice the anxiety and the enthusiasm? How the day paints the sky in so many colours. Are you blind, don't you see it? When the day reaches the night, the day plunges itself into the arms of the night. A rush of a plunge, into the arms of the night! It happens every sunset. Then the day spends the night with the night. There is a time for rest, sleep, love, worship and meditation; and then the time comes to say goodbye. The day must say goodbye to the night but the night doesn't want the day to go. So the night holds on to the day and only one ray of light comes out and then a second ray and a third ray of light; slowly, slowly, slowly the light comes out in the morning. How different from sunset. So when the day is day and the night is night there will be intense attraction between the day and the night. It is because of that intense attraction there is a forbidden space between a man and a woman. The forbidden space is not just physical; but also psychological and sociological. It should not be invaded, because of the intense attraction that there is between the male and the female. But when the night tries to become day, the night will no longer be truly night. The day will no longer be attracted to the night. When the night is rivaling the day, in the workplace, it's now an adversarial relationship not attraction. When the day is no longer attracted to the night what will happen? Its not what will happen but what is already happening. The day will now mate with the day. Wherever the modern feminist revolution and its struggle for women's liberation have taken roots the necessary corollary has always been homosexuality. But that is not our subject tonight. The slave woman is still down there and we want to know how a slave woman will give birth to her mistress. When the night tries to become day not only does the night lose her femininity, but she loses something else. She loses her fertility. She can't have babies. But she is traveling first class, remember! So then how will babies come? Eventually, the answer is the slave woman down there who is too poor to try and become day. So her womb is still fertile. This womb will now become a factory and

she will be paid for her services. For nine months she will live like a queen. No genetically reengineered food for her but real food. No milk and meat with hormones, that's for the rest. So for nine months she lives like a queen. When the baby is born, baby goes first class and mum goes back down in the hold. So a slave woman has given birth to her mistress and it has already started. While the scholars of Islam have been eating halva, it has already started. We are living now in the Last Age. The only ones, who can read and understand and penetrate the last age, realize the reality of the world around them today; are who see with two eyes not one. Who in addition to the effort that they make to acquire knowledge externally -that effort has to be made- they also are blessed with the capacity for internally derived knowledge. When these two oceans of knowledge come together then they can understand, and penetrate the reality of the world in which we live in today. This has been an introduction to Islamic Spirituality, The Forgotten Path of Knowledge, to you.

We pray that Allah ﷻ may grant that tonight's humble lecture may be a wake up call, and that we may return to this important branch of knowledge and to this effort which must be made which will realize it.

Transcribed by Irshad Soofi Siddiqui.